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# FDD's LONG WAR JOURNAL

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Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria shows more 'little jihadists'

(//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/09/turkistan-islamic-party-

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**Children as seen in the video**

The Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria (TIP), an al Qaeda-linked Uighur jihadist group, has released a new video showing celebrations for the Muslim holiday Eid al Adha. Part of the video is dedicated to what it refers to as “little jihadists,” or children members of the group.

Most of the video includes small clips and photos from the Eid al Adha celebrations, combat footage from recent battles, and some of its killed fighters. Around halfway through the video, children are shown posing with AK-47 assault rifles, pistols, and attending Sharia classes. Many of the children are boys, but some girls are also seen with weapons in the video. It was a release similar to a video from last September, but that video also showed the children partaking in weapons training. (See LWJ report, Uighur jihadist group in Syria advertises ‘little jihadists’.)

Last July, the group first publicized a training camp in Idlib. Earlier this year, TIP-affiliated Twitter accounts published photos showing children attending a military training camp somewhere in northwestern Syria.

While the TIP has been active in Syria, the organization's core leadership is based in Afghanistan and Pakistan and operates in those countries as well as in China. The TIP has also advertised camps for children in the Afghan-Pakistan region.

In a video released in 2013, the jihadist group promoted a camp for children in Pakistan, some of whom appear to be no older than six. The children were shown firing handguns, AK-47 assault rifles, and a PKM machine-gun from various positions. As the children fired their weapons, the black flag of the Taliban and a light blue banner used by the Turkistan Islamic Party could be seen flying in the background.





The TIP is not the only foreign al Qaeda ally in Syria known to train children. In December, the Imam Bukhari Jamaat (also known as Katibat Imam Bukhari), an Uzbek group in Syria loyal to the Taliban, released an 18-minute video showing the group training dozens of children. The children, who range from under 10 to mid-teens, are seen taking part in physical exercises and lessons on how to handle and fire weapons. (See LWJ report, Uzbek group in Syria trains children for jihad.)

The popular Saudi cleric Abdullah al Muhaysini's Jihad Callers Center also released a video last September showing native Syrian children training at a camp ran by the group. Muhaysini is closely tied to al Qaeda and the Al Nusra Front. Additionally, the Chechen-led Junud al Sham, led by US-designated terrorist Muslim Shishani, is known to have ran training camps for children in the past. The Islamic State, which garners the most media attention, is infamous for its training camps for children.

#### **Screenshots from the video:**









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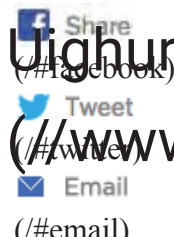
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Uighur jihadist group in Syria advertises 'little jihadists'

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BY BILL ROGGIO AND CALEB WEISS (//WWW.LONGWARJOURNAL.ORG/ARCHIVES/AUTHOR/BILL-ROGGIO-AND-CALEB-WEISS) |

September 24, 2015 | bill.roggio@longwarjournal.org |



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### Two children shown in the video

The Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), an al Qaeda-affiliated Uighur jihadist group that is operating in Syria, recently released a video that includes photos of children with weapons and jihadist garb accompanied by an Uighur-language nasheed [A cappella Islamic music]. The children were described as “little jihadis” on the TIP’s official Twitter feed.

Most of the photos in the slideshow depict TIP fighters posing for the camera or operating near the frontlines, while others show more scenes from the battle at the Abu Duhour airbase in Idlib province. Nearly halfway into the video, fighters are seen posing with their children before the photos exclusively feature the “little jihadis.” The children are shown posing with AK-47 assault rifles, attending Sharia classes, and partaking in weapons training.



This is not the first time that the TIP has shown children in training. In July, the group first publicized (https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/09/2Fuighur-jihadist-group-in-syria-advertises-little-jihadists.php&title=Uighur%20jihadist%20group%20in%20Syria%20advertises%20%27little%20jihadists%27%20%7C%20FDD%27s%20Long%20W which appears to be in the same area. Several of those photos depict the children learning how to operate AK-47s, sub-machine guns, and other handguns. In both cases, many of the children appear to be Uighur, but it is possible that some are native Syrians. The group's former military leader was a native Syrian and the group has featured other Syrians in its ranks before.

While the Islamic State gets most of the attention regarding training camps for children it runs, the group is far from the only jihadist group in Syria that does so. The TIP, Al Nusrah Front, al Qaeda's official branch in the country, and the Chechen-led Junud al Sham all run camps for children. Additionally, two groups in the Islamic Front coalition, Jaish al Islam and Ahrar al Sham, a powerful al Qaeda-ally, are also known to train children. A group run by Abdullah al Muhaysini, a popular al Qaeda-linked cleric from Saudi Arabia, has also released a video showing children in training (/www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/09/saudi-al-qaeda-cleric-showcases-training-camp-for-children-in-syria.php).

The TIP in Syria is known to operate at least two other training camps in Syria. One camp is run for children, which appears to be in a different location in Idlib than the one mentioned above. The second camp is for adult fighters, albeit in a very rudimentary setting. [For more information, see this map (/militaryedge.org/embedmap/?map\_id=12222) made by *The Long War Journal*.]

While the TIP has been active in Syria, its core leadership is based in Afghanistan and Pakistan and operates in those countries as well as in China. The TIP has also advertised camps for children and women in the Afghan-Pakistan region.

In a video released in the spring of 2013, the jihadist group promoted a camp for children (/www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/04/turkistan\_islamic\_pa\_2.php) in Pakistan, some of whom appear to be no older than six. The children are shown firing handguns, AK-47 assault rifles, and a PKM machine-gun from various positions. As the children fire their weapons, the black flag of the Taliban and a light blue banner used by the Turkistan Islamic Party can be seen flying in the background.

In the summer of 2013, the group published a video that showed five burka-clad women training (/www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/07/turkistan\_islamic\_pa\_4.php) with pistols, assault and sniper rifles, machine guns, and grenade launchers.

Both videos were likely filmed in Mir Ali in Pakistan's Taliban-controlled tribal agency of North Waziristan. The TIP was based there before a Pakistani military offensive targeted the group

(/www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/05/turkistan\_islamic\_party\_target.php) starting in June 2014.

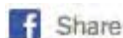
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The TIP has been involved in almost all of the major operations that have taken place in Idlib province in Syria this year. The jihadist group assisted in the capture of the Abu Duhour airbase and the city of Jisr al Shughur, where it launched at least two suicide bombings in support of the operation. It also helped overrun several important towns and villages in the strategic Al Ghab plain with Jund al Aqsa and two Uzbek groups, Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad, an al Qaeda affiliate, and the Imam Bukhari Jamaat, which has pledged allegiance to Mullah Akhtar Mansour of the Taliban.

[For more information on the TIP's role in these offensives, see *LWJ* report, Turkistan Islamic Party had significant role in recent Idlib offensive (<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/04/turkistan-islamic-party-had-significant-role-recent-idlib-offensive.php>), and *Threat Matrix* reports, Turkistan Islamic Party releases photos from captured Syrian regime airbase (<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/09/turkistan-islamic-party-releases-photos-from-captured-syrian-regime-airbase.php>), Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria involved in new Idlib offensive (<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/04/turkistan-islamic-party-in-syria-involved-in-new-idlib-offensive.php>), Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria conducted suicide bombings at Jisr al Shughur (<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/turkistan-islamic-party-in-syria-conducted-suicide-bombing-at-jisr-al-shughur.php>), and Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria takes part in battle for the Al Ghab plain (<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/08/turkistan-islamic-party-in-syria-assists-jihadist-coalition-in-battle-for-the-al-ghab-plain.php>).]

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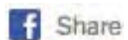
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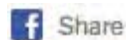
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Turkistan Islamic Party continues to train children in Syria

(//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/03/turkistan-islamic-party-continues-to-train-children-in-syria.php)

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**Photo purportedly showing the TIP training children in weapons in northwestern Syria**

Photos released by social media accounts linked to the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), a Chinese Uighur jihadist group that is part of al Qaeda's international network, show the group training children in Syria. The photos are unconfirmed and undated, but the TIP is known to operate training camps for children in northwestern Syria.

The three photos show children, many of which are Uighur, attending a Sharia school ran by the group and participating in weapons training. Last September, the TIP released a video showing the training of what it called "little jihadists." The children are shown posing with AK-47 assault rifles, attending Sharia classes, and partaking in weapons training.



In July, the group first publicized a training camp in Idlib, which appears to be in the same area. Several of those photos depict the children learning how to operate AK-47s, sub-machine guns, and handguns. (See LWJ report, Uighur jihadist group in Syria advertises 'little jihadists'.)

The TIP is not the only foreign al Qaeda ally in Syria known to train children. In December, the Imam Bukhari Jamaat (also known as Katibat Imam Bukhari), an Uzbek group in Syria loyal to the Taliban, released an 18-minute video showing the group training dozens of children. The children, who range from under 10 to mid-teens, are seen taking part in physical exercises and lessons on how to handle and fire weapons. (See LWJ report, Uzbek group in Syria trains children for jihad.)

The popular Saudi cleric Abdullah al Muhaysini's Jihad Callers Center also released a video last September showing native Syrian children training at a camp ran by the group. Muhaysini is closely tied to al Qaeda and the Al Nusrah Front. Additionally, the Chechen-led Junud al Sham, led by US-designated terrorist Muslim Shishani, is known to have ran training camps for children in the past. The Islamic State, which gets most of the media attention on its training of children, has also published several videos from many of its proclaimed provinces showing its "cubs" being trained for jihad.

### **Photos showing the children in the TIP-ran school:**



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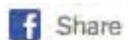


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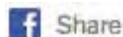
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